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(Left) A floodlight view of the Airspeed Envoy (No. 13, Findlay and Waller) on the line in the dawn of Tuesday morning. (Flight photograph.) (Right) Swinging the Ratier airscrew of Major Miller's Mew Gull. Note the impressive spinner covering the pitch-operating electric motor. (Below) Monday's preparations—a pleasant scene at Portsmouth airport. In the foreground is Victor Smith's Sparrow Hawk. (Flight photograph.)

AS dawn broke at Portsmouth on Tuesday, cold and clear, the nine aeroplanes in the £10,000 Schlesinger African Air Race took off from the City Airport on their 6,150-mile journey—an adventurous journey for some, a deadly monotonous one for others. That was only two days ago, yet by the time these words appear, the great adventure may well be over, with the winner being acclaimed in Johannesburg, *en fête* for its great Empire Exhibition.

Although the event was a formula handicap, the start was virtually a scratch one, allowances being adjusted at Cairo. Actually, the machines left Portsmouth at one-minute intervals. The handicaps are given in the table on page 334.

Four Non-starters

The original entries numbered more than nine. Four machines did not come to the line. They were the new Miles Peregrine, not completed in time; Lt. Misri Chand's Vega Gull, which likewise was not ready; Mr. John E. Carberry's Vega Gull, put out of the running by the nose-over which terminated its Atlantic flight in the hands of Mrs. Markham; and the Mew Gull, which would have been flown by poor Tom Campbell Black.

There might have been low cloud and heavy rain over South-Eastern Europe and all manner of meteorological horrors over Africa, but for the start of the race no September morning's weather could have been better. Competitors, officials and the great mass of spectators motored, cycled or walked to the Airport at 5 a.m. under a cloudless night sky.

At the floodlit aerodrome the wind-socks hung limply as the nine machines were wheeled by ghostly figures towards a preliminary starting line. However, with the rising of the sun a wind of some sort might have been expected and, even as the low hills to the east of the airport were outlined against the dawn, the socks filled gently and swung away from their posts.

From 5.30 a.m. onwards there were all the usual accompaniments of an approaching zero hour—made all the more impressive by the semi-darkness and reminiscent of the

